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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/077,599	02/15/2002	Hirokazu Hisano	GK/48	1547

7590 11/20/2003
W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.
551 Paper Mill Road
P.O. Box 9206
Newark, DE 19714-9206

EXAMINER

AHMAD, NASSER

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1772

DATE MAILED: 11/20/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application N .

10/077,599

Applicant(s)

HISANO ET AL.

Examin r

Nasser Ahmad

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 15-19 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14, 20 and 21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 5.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-14 and 20-21, drawn to a sealing material, classified in class 428, subclass 40.1.
 - II. Claim 15-19, drawn to a method for producing a sealing material, classified in class 156, subclass 250.
2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because:
3. Inventions Group II and Group I are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product can be made by a materially different process such as providing pre-cut strips for the laminate, instead of slitting the laminated sheets to the claimed dimension.
4. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
5. During a telephone conversation with Alan Wheatcraft on November 13, 2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-14 and 20-21. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in

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replying to this Office action. Claim 15-19 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

6. Applicant should that claims 20 and 21 were presented to the applicant as a separate group and, upon further review, have been grouped together with the claims of group I because said claims are also directed to the product claimed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

8. Claims 1- 6 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by

The English Translation of European Patent Application: 84112904.2.

The English translation relates to a seal comprising microporous polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) in which the height profile is greater than the width (page-3, paragraph-1). The seal has adhesive on one surface and the adhesive is covered by a release paper (page-3, paragraph-3). Although the English translation fails to teach that the PTFE is expanded PTFE, it is understood by the examiner that a microporous PTFE would include expanded PTFE. Further, the seal is understood to include a plurality of film laminated together as one thick seal of PTFE because the films would fuse during extrusion to form said one thick seal.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claims 1-13 and 20-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over The English Translation of European Patent Application: 84112904.2 in view of Hamilton (5,486,010).

The English Translation, as discussed above, fails to teach that the seal has fluid penetration prevention layer therewith. Hamilton discloses a seal comprising a core of expanded porous PTFE wrapped in a film of PTFE to prevent creeping and maintain the desired height-to-weight ratio (col. 7, lines 10-22). The PTFE can be PTFE-HEP copolymer, etc. (col. 10, lines 8-13). Therefore, it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to utilize Hamilton's teaching of using expanded PTFE wrapped in a PTFE film in the invention of the English Translation'904.2 with the motivation to provide for fluid barrier characteristics because the film, when stretched and wrapped about the expanded core, would be compacted or crushed under pressure.

The expanded PTFE would inherently exhibit elastomeric property.

Further, it would have been an obvious design choice modification to modify The English Translation's seal to have a ring form for sealing gasket flanges, etc. because a change in shape is found to be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

11. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

12. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 21 contains the trademark/trade name Sifel®. Where a trademark or trade name is used in a claim as a limitation to identify or describe a particular material or product, the claim does not comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. See *Ex parte Simpson*, 218 USPQ 1020 (Bd. App. 1982). The claim scope is uncertain since the trademark or trade name cannot be used properly to identify any particular material or product. A trademark or trade name is used to identify a source of goods, and not the goods themselves. Thus, a trademark or trade name does not identify or describe the goods associated with the trademark or trade name. In the present case, the trademark/trade name is used to identify/describe elastomer but fails to disclose as to what material it is and, accordingly, the identification/description is indefinite.

Allowable Subject Matter

13. Claim 14 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

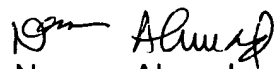
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The prior art uncovered so far fails to teach or suggest the presence of a double sided adhesive tape to join the ends of the seal to form the ring-shaped seal.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nasser Ahmad whose telephone number is (703) 308-4424. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 7:30AM to 5:00PM. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon, can be reached on 308-4251. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703)872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.


Nasser Ahmad
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1772

N. Ahmad.

November 16, 2003.